GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2562
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2001
LOWERING THE AGE LIMIT OF SENIOR CITIZENS
KAMBALAPADU E. KRISHNAMURTHY

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are reviewing to decrease the age limit to qualify as Senior Citizens in India from 65 years to 60 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of prevailing benefits to them from the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SMT. MANEKA GANDHI)

(a) As per the National Policy on Older Persons announced in January, 1999 the age limit to qualifyas Senior Citizens in India is 60 years plus. However, due to budgetary constraints several Ministries and departments of the Govt. of India have been prescribing different age limits to qualify as Senior Citizens.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) For the Welfare of the senior citizens financial assistance as grant-in-aid is given through various programmes/schemes by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment i.e.

(i) An Integrated Programme for Older Persons-Under this scheme the Government of IndiaMinistry of Social Justice & Empowerment provides Grant-in-aid/financial assistance to Non- Governmental Organisations for establishment and maintenance of Old Age Homes, Day Care Centre, Mobile Medicare Units and Non-Institutional Service Centres.

(ii) Scheme of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Voluntary Orgnisations/Self Help Groupsfor Construction of Old Age Homes/Multi Service Centres for Older Persons-Under this schemethe Grant-in-aid is provided to eligible organizations for construction of Old Age Home and Multi service centers for older persons.

Apart from the above financial assistance, there are the following welfare schemes by the Government for the older persons:-

(i) Government have recently approved a scheme called `ANNAPURNA Scheme` under which10Kgs of food grains would be provided to such destitute elderly every month who are not in receipt of old age pension scheme of Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment.

(ii) On the request of this Ministry, Chief Justice of India advised Chief Justices of all HighCourts in the Country to ensure expeditious disposal of Court Cases involving Older Persons.

(iii) Union Health Ministry has issued instructions to all the State Governments/UTAdministrations for provision of separate queues for older persons in hospitals at all stages.

(iv) At the initiative and with the financial assistance of this Ministry, a Telephone helpline for older persons has been started by an NGO called Agewell Foundation. This helpline is functional from April 1999.

(v) The Department of Telecommunications has already announced the Government decision to give telephone connections to senior citizens aged 65 years and above on priority.

(vi) National Institute of Social Defence has started a 3 months course for home care of elderly disabled persons in August, 1999. This

course will help to prepare a cadre of Geriatric Animators to render comprehensive care to the aged in their homes and in the community.

(vii) Aadhar has been set up to function as Secretariat of National Council for OlderPersons(NCOP) . The major activities of Aadhar include receiving and taking follow up action on representations, the complaints and grievances of older persons.